

BAND TIPS: Copyright Article Basics



FirstMusicContact

The Irish Music Rights Organisation is a national organisation of songwriters, composers and music publishers. It administers various rights, including the performing rights in copyright music, in Ireland on behalf of its members and on behalf of the members of the 63 overseas societies affiliated to it.

IMRO is a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee. Its principal activity is the collection of royalties when copyright music is broadcast or performed in public (e.g. in discos, hotels, restaurants, pubs, etc.) and the distribution of those royalties to the relevant songwriters and publishers.

Who can become a Member of IMRO?

Songwriters, composers and music publishers may become members of IMRO, subject to satisfying certain criteria. For further information please telephone or e-mail Membership Services in IMRO on 01 - 661 4844 or at info@imro.ie.

What is Copyright?

Copyright is a property right, regulated by statute (the Copyright Act 2000) which gives the owner of a creative work (e.g. a song or a piece of music) the right to permit or prevent the use of that work by others. Copyright confers on the creator of a work the right to allow or prevent a number of 'restricted acts'. These restricted acts include making a copy of the work, making the work available to the public and making an adaptation of the work.

Intellectual property refers to all intangible property such as copyrights or patents.

Can I Copyright a Creative Work?

There is no actual system for copyrighting a work of creativity. Copyright automatically subsists by virtue of an original work being produced in material form, e.g. tape, manuscript. If a dispute over ownership of a work arises it is important for the owner to be able to prove that he/she owned the work at a particular date. The following system may be used:-

1. Put the tape or sheet music or the lyrics of a song/work into an envelope.
2. Address the envelope to yourself and write the name of the song/work on the outside.
3. Post the envelope to yourself by registered post.
4. When you receive the envelope **DO NOT OPEN IT**. Make sure that the date is clearly stamped and that the envelope is completely sealed.
5. Keep the envelope in a safe place (e.g. your solicitor's office or a bank).

How Long Does Copyright Last in Ireland?

The copyright in a musical work expires 70 years after the death of the songwriter/composer who wrote the work or if two or more people are responsible for the work 70 years after the death of whoever dies last. The copyright in a sound recording expires 50 years after the date it was first lawfully made available to the public.

How Does IMRO Collect Royalties?

IMRO collects royalties by issuing licences, in return for a fee (a royalty), to TV and radio stations that broadcast copyright music and venues such as discos, pubs, etc. that perform copyright music in public. Royalties are payable whether the music is live or recorded.

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Who Needs an IMRO Licence?

It is illegal to use copyright music without first obtaining the permission of the owner of the music. This permission is normally obtained by paying a royalty to IMRO in return for which a licence is issued.

The owner of any premises where copyright is performed in public needs an IMRO licence. For further information please contact IMRO on 01-661 4844.

For more information see the IMRO FAQ page:

<http://www.imro.ie/node/686>

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